



REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP ON CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Research Highlights

Youth Development and Engagement, Natural Resources Management, Democracy and Governance- Volume I
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The Regional Partnership for Culture and Development (RPCD) is a program of USAID's Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP). The goal of the RPCD is to gather and disseminate information that will improve development efforts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

Research Highlights is a biannual e-newsletter describing current and anticipated research in the MENA region in three focus areas: natural resources management, youth development and engagement, and democracy and governance. We welcome your comments or submissions for future publications at rpcdinfo@fhi360.org.

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Global Employment Trends (GET), International Labour Organization, 2012

Author: International Labour Office/International Labour Organization

Publication Date: February 2012

This GET report offers the most recent global and regional information, facts and figures, on several indicators of the labor market, including unemployment, youth employment and working poverty. According to the GET 2012 report, youth is still among the populations suffering most from the global economic and job crisis. The projections presented in this report also reveal that this situation isn't to change in the near future, as 3 million new unemployed are expected in 2012, reaching 206 million by 2016. The authors of the report call for targeted measures and strategies to increase job growth in the real economy, while warning that public support measures do not suffice in developing sustainable recovery actions. This report informs policy makers on strategies to adopt in order to engage and encourage the private sector for more job creation. Although the report addresses the employment issue at a global level, it also provides with precise information on youth unemployment trends and presents with interesting projections for the near future.

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_171679.pdf

World Youth Report 2012: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times, 2012

Author: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Publication Date: February 2012

This report, largely based on e-discussions with youth and representatives of youth-led organizations, explores young people's employment issues. Frustrated with underemployment and high rates of unemployment, youth shared their concerns, and wondered if the quality and type of education they were receiving was adequate and relevant to the jobs that are available. Young women still confront job segregation and salary discrimination. Due to their countries' lack of support, youth seek job opportunities through migration. They use formal and informal business networks to identify emerging opportunities for employment such as volunteering and internships to develop life skills and improve employment prospects. Some, seeing the dearth in job opportunities, gravitate towards entrepreneurship. Short-term contracts and low wages make their jobs insecure. Moreover, governments are implementing austerity measures to reduce public spending, causing more unemployment in this economic crisis. Although many conveyed a lack of confidence in their future, youth consider self-motivation, dedication, patience, and a positive outlook their only tools for successfully finding a job.

http://www.unworldyouthreport.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=1&Itemid=67

**The Arab World World's Education Report Card: School Climate and Citizenship Skills**

Author: Muhammad Faour
Publication Date: February 2012

This Carnegie Endowment report examines education and school climate in the MENA region. The focus is on the quality and character of schooling including safety; quality of teaching; curriculum and learning styles; poor infrastructure; family involvement; and interpersonal relationships among other factors. Arguably, social change through education is essential to instill democratic values and a respect for the human rights and the rule of law, particularly in new transitioning democracies such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. However, international evaluation metrics and examinations such as the TIMMS, PIRLS and PISA highlight major deficiencies in most MENA countries. Notwithstanding the heterogeneity of Arab nations, it is found that the challenges facing education are chronic and widespread across the MENA region and that education of citizens is severely lacking. One alarming conclusion is that “most students do not feel safe physically, socially, or emotionally in their schools.” The author of the report, Mahammad Faour is a senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Center and has extensive knowledge of education reform in Arab countries.

http://carnegieendowment.org/files/school_climate.pdf

Civic Engagement of Youth in the Middle East and North Africa: An Analysis of Key Drivers and Outcomes

Author: Mercy Corps
Publication Date: February 2012

This report seeks to assess the actual implication of increased youth civic engagement for youth and the greater society in the MENA region. It was found that traditional associations between youth civic engagement and employability or social capital do not necessary hold true for Arab youth. However, young people who participate in civic activities are more likely to be politically active. The authors conclude that civic engagement programs need to focus on reaching youth from rural areas and young women; that further research is needed into ways to promote engagement among youth; and that programs targeting employment should be enhanced. The research is based on data from recent surveys of youth in seven MENA countries and statistical analysis to determine the relationship between youth civic engagement and social outcomes. This is supplemented by qualitative data from personal interviews with youth participants in regional Mercy Corps civic engagement projects.

http://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/civic_engagement_of_youth_in_mena_0.pdf

Adaptation to a Changing Climate in the Arab Countries

Author: World Bank

Publication Date: Expected early 2012

This report will summarize available climate change literature in Arabic, French, and English as well as identify gaps and describe policy options. Through a participatory process, the report has engaged a broad range of regional stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive perspective of climate change impacts; the effect of these impacts on the livelihoods of vulnerable groups; and policy recommendations for Arab countries. Between October 2011 and January 2012, ministries, civil society groups, academics, the private sector, and other stakeholders in Arab countries were invited to both review the draft report, and participate in a series of regional consultations.

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/0,,contentMDK:22870566~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:256299,00.html>

Mediterranean Wetlands Report

Author: The Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory

Publication Date: February 2012

The Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory (MWO) published its first Mediterranean Wetlands Report based on a three-year study to monitor the status and trends of wetlands in the region. A total of 17 indicators were developed and evaluated. The main themes that are covered include water resources management and optimization of wetland services (e.g., pollution, water and irrigation); adaptation to climate change and the role of wetlands; ecosystem health and human pressure in coastal areas; wetland natural resources management; and sustainable usage. The study finds contrasting trends for wetlands biodiversity between the Western and the Eastern Mediterranean regions and identifies multiple causes of wetland degradation. It points to the growing pressure on water resources and argues that political and governance issues — in addition to the institutional divides between main stakeholders — are the main causes of these pressures.

<http://www.medwetlands-obs.org/en/content/monitoring-results>

State of the Water Report in the Arab Region - Towards Improved Water Governance

Author: Water Governance Programme for Arab States (WGP-AS)

Publication Date: Expected 2012

This report will be designed to move beyond the traditional inventories of availability, uses, and accessibility of water resources toward research that links developmental issues with current water resources management practices in the region. It will aim to portray real water governance issues such as participation, transparency, equity, rules of law, and accountability in terms of achievements, constraints, challenges, opportunities, projections, and recommendations. The report also intends to

assess the degree of incorporation of socio-economic and environmental considerations into water resources management in the Arab region.

<http://www.wgpas-undp.org/index.php/en/state-of-water-report>

World Water Development Report (WWDR) - Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk

Author: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Publication Date: March 2012

The WWDR is the United Nation's flagship report on the state of the world's freshwater resources. The report's fourth volume aims to encourage all stakeholders to engage early in decision making processes to improve the quality and acceptance of decisions and the probability of successful implementation. It highlights that more responsible action by all water users has enormous potential to lead to better outcomes. This, however, will require political, social, economic, and technical responses at all levels of government and from business and communities - both local and international. Thirteen case studies are examined by the report including studies on Jordan and Morocco from the Middle East region.

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/water/wwap/wwdr/wwdr4-2012/>

Towards Creating Areas of Excellence and New Sustainable Cities in Egypt: Critical View of New Cities Planning

Author: Nisreen El-Lahham
Publication Date: January 2012

This Arabic-language working paper is among the latest publications of the Information Decision Support Center in Cairo, Egypt. The main objective of the paper is to sketch a strategic orientation for the purpose of establishing new sustainable urban communities in the Egyptian desert based on previous experiences and lessons learned. The most important theories of sustainable cities are identified as well as related establishment standards and planning criteria. The paper delineates the most prominent international experiences and analyzes the pros and cons of the Egyptian experience in building new cities in the desert. Finally, the paper provides a future vision for Egyptian cities, in light of anticipated changes, and suggests a basis for implementation that achieves all aspects of sustainability.

http://www.idsc.gov.eg/Upload/Documents/294/Sustainable_Cities.pdf

Morocco: Outfoxing the Opposition

Author: Ahmed Benchemsi
Publication Date: January 2012

The author of this article argues that Morocco's vaunted constitutional reform and election of June-July 2011 fell short of the standards of democracy, because the constitutional changes are largely cosmetic and the election was ridden with irregularities. The core of the article presents a close analysis of the language of the new constitution, pointing out subtleties in the wording that keep important powers with the King and those he controls, and keep the legislative, executive and judicial branches roughly as weak as before the reform. The article states that the Monarchy will not keep revolution at bay indefinitely by hiking wages and keeping the price of staples low; despite the relative disorganization of the pro-democracy protesters to date, they are a force with which the Monarchy must eventually have a full reckoning.

The piece is written by Ahmed Benchemsi, a visiting scholar at Stanford University and an award-winning journalist. The article's methodology relies largely on focused textual analysis, examining excerpts from the new constitution and interpreting their meaning in the greater political context.

<http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/gratis/Benchemsi-23-1.pdf>

Globalized Palestine: The National Sell-Out of a Homeland

Author: Khalil Nakhleh
Publication Date: 2012

This book presents a critique of the current model of international development in what the author terms the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It analyzes in particular the role of three parties: Palestinians members of the economic and political elite, development NGOs run by Palestinians, and international aid agencies. The author argues that the kind of advancement the Palestinian people seek will be difficult to achieve as long as they are dependent on Western assistance, when in some cases the same entities providing the aid are opposed to political aims held by many Palestinians.

The book is written by Khalil Nakhleh, a PhD graduate of Indiana University and an author of several books. The book presents a spirited critique of international assistance in the West Bank and Gaza, and may be useful reading for development actors interested in learning the arguments and concerns of those who find the current model untenable.

<http://www.africaworldpressbooks.com/servlet/Detail?no=908>

The Arab Spring in 2012

Author: Michael Bauer and Thomas Schiller

Publication Date: January 2012

This report takes a broad view of the effects of the Arab Spring as it continues to unfold more than a year after its genesis. Including all Arab Spring countries and many of their affected neighbors in its scope, the article calls attention to political and socio-economic changes currently taking place within countries in transition. The authors argue that Western policymakers must adjust to Turkey's growing status as a powerful partner, Iran's loss of influence and Israel's growing isolation. The document recommends changes in policies by the EU towards the Middle East as a whole and revisiting its 2011 *European Neighborhood Policy*.

The report is published by the Center for Applied Policy Research - Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich and co-authored by Michael Bauer and Thomas Schiller, Middle East and Maghreb specialists. The document is useful for policy makers and development strategists in need of a single overarching narrative to inspire further investigation and provide some initial foundation for decision making.

<http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?fecvnodeid=110607&groupot593=0c54e3b3-1e9c-bel1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&dom=1&fecvid=33&ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-bel1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&v33=110607&id=136306>

Religion and Politics and the Arab Transitions

Author: Barah Mikail

Publication Date: February 2012

This report discusses the recent rise in Arab countries of Islamist parties, formerly excluded from the political sphere. Warning against any attempt to work against popular sentiment in the region by trying to exclude religion from politics, the author argues that religion and democracy can co-exist in government, and shows that in the decades to come, the challenge will be integrating democratic values and practices within religious contexts. The article provides examples of states that have found a role for religion within government while continuing to modernize and keep some democratic principles intact. The article concludes that to maintain legitimacy, and to hold onto gains achieved largely through their reputation for opposing the previous regimes, the new leaders in the region will need to improve economic conditions, ensure transparent parliamentary debates, and heed international recommendations on peaceful transition and good governance.

The report is authored by Barah Mikail, a senior researcher at FRIDE, the European think-tank for global action. It provides a useful primer on the accession of Islamist parties to power and can give inputs into policy and programming interventions related to democracy and governance in the region.

<http://www.fride.org/publication/991/religion-and-politics-in-arab-transitions>

The Political Economy of Arab Uprisings

Author: Nadine Sika

Publication Date: March 2012

This research paper analyzes three new elements of the political economy in Arab world: “Neoliberal reform accompanied by corruption and cronyism”; “High unemployment levels and rising social inequalities”; and “Increasing incidences of social protests.” The authors find that these three trends have appeared as a result of Arab governments and Western actors pushing forward economic liberalization in the region without giving equal attention to supporting democracy. The paper concludes that the dynamics of popular mobilization and uprisings are likely to remain the rule rather than the exception, since Arab governments are still advocating a service-based economy and blaming activists for disruption, instead of working to build strong development institutions.

This research is authored by Nadine Sika, a professor of political science at the American University in Cairo and a consultant to the United Nations Development Program. The document is published by The European Institute of the Mediterranean, submitted as part of the EurMeSCo Conference “A New Mediterranean Political Landscape? The Arab Spring and Euro-Mediterranean Relations.” The paper is intended to target policy makers, both regional and international, for long-term strategic planning.

<http://www.euromesco.net/images/papers/papersiemed10.pdf>